

News from the

**U.S. Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions**

Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), Chairman



**For Immediate Release
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Contact: Craig Orfield (202) 224-6770**

***HELP COMMITTEE APPROVES PILOT PROGRAM AIMED AT
STRENGTHENING AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS SUBJECTS IN SCHOOLS***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today announced the passage of the “American History Achievement Act,” S. 860, which would create a 10-state pilot study to provide state-by-state comparisons for 8th and 12th grades to assess and improve knowledge of American history and civics. The Committee also voted in favor of five Presidential nominations.

The legislation, sponsored by Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) was approved unanimously on Wednesday, and is cosponsored by the Committee’s Ranking Member, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA). The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) will determine which 10 states will participate in the pilot program.

“It is imperative to the education of our children that they understand America’s vibrant history and the function of civics in their daily lives,” Enzi said. “This bill will help to reinvigorate the importance of these subjects back into our schools.”

In 2001, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that “American History” had the largest percentage of students scoring below basic of any

subject that was tested, including mathematics, science, and reading. Other findings conclude:

- 75 percent of 4th grade students could not correctly identify “the three parts of the federal government of the United States” out of four possible choices;
- 73 percent of 4th graders could not identify the Constitution from among four choices as “the document that contains the basic rules used to run the United States government;”
- 91 percent of 8th grade students could not “list two issues that were important in causing the Civil War,” nor “list the Northern and Southern positions on each of these issues.”

“As Chairman of the HELP Committee, I am grateful for the commitment to this issue by Senator Alexander and Senator Kennedy, both of whom have worked tirelessly to make this bill a reality,” Enzi concluded.

The following nominations were also approved:

Jerry Gayle Bridges, to be Chief Financial Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, Corporation for National and Community Service;

Vince J. Juaristi, to be Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Corporation for National and Community Service;

J. C. A. Stagg, to be Member of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation;

Kent D. Talbert, to be General Counsel, Department of Education, Department of Education;

Horace A. Thompson, to be Member of the, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

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